

STORIES OF HOMEMAKERS WHO ARE MANAGING SUCCESSFULLY  
UNDER WAR CONDITIONS

U. S. Department of Agriculture

A Suggested Procedure and Interview Schedule for Use by State  
Specialists and Home Demonstration Agents

As a home demonstration agent you are of course developing ways to help homemakers meet new demands on their time. Have you thought of collecting some stories of "good managers" in your State?

This is one way to find out how successfully farm women are managing under new conditions by doing such things as taking on farm duties for the first time, serving irregular meals, doing volunteer war work. A method for getting these stories is outlined below.

What is the purpose of collecting stories of farm women who are good managers?

So that extension workers can use them in helping other homemakers to manage better under war conditions. The aim of this interview will be to get information and learn the attitudes of the homemaker and not to instruct or assist her. Such stories may be used in preparing leaflets, news articles, circular letters, radio talks, interviews and dialogs, playlets, exhibits, and for meetings and method demonstrations. (Suggested form for leaflet is attached.)

How will the stories be obtained?

Through home visits by home demonstration agents and other extension workers.

How many stories should be obtained?

Three or four per county are suggested.

What kind of farm family should be visited for stories?

In choosing the three or four families, keep in mind that the purpose of the case study is to present to other families the ways in which certain women are managing their time to get their work done without undue fatigue, so that these other families can follow the same or similar plans. Therefore, it is important to select families who of necessity have much work to do, but whose facilities for doing this work are not so well developed that women reading these stories will remark: "Well, if I had all those labor-saving devices, I probably could do that too." Keep the following factors in mind when selecting the families:

Successful Manager - (There should be some evidence that the homemaker is successful in managing her home and in finding time to do extra work at home, on the farm, or elsewhere.) The homemaker should be one who is generally thought of in the neighborhood and by the home demonstration agent as a good manager. That is, one who uses her time and



resources to good advantage, is a skilled housekeeper, gets her work accomplished without getting overtired and confused, keeps an even temper, helps to maintain happy family relationships.

Full-time Homemaker - Select a homemaker who is not engaged in paid work off the farm, but instead is giving full time to homemaking, plus any farm duties or volunteer war work she may have taken over.

Type of Family - The family should be a farm family, with children at home under 21. It is preferable that at least one of the families have a child under 5 years of age. Care of little children is time-consuming.

Home Conveniences - Study the 1940 census data on housing to determine the extent of modern conveniences in the county. Then, for example, if 30 percent have electricity, one of the families chosen to represent those homes can have electricity. If very few, say 10 percent, have electricity, do not select a home with electricity for a story. If almost all do, all families selected may have that convenience.

Type of Farm and Income Level - If one type of farming predominates in the county, the families should represent this type. They should not be more than the average income level, and at least one should represent the lower income level. Well-to-do homemakers with modern conveniences and money to spend on help and labor-saving devices can get ideas from people with less opportunity, but the less well-to-do homemaker can not follow management plans of families with expensive equipment or hired help. The homemaker's education might also be a factor.

If more than one type of farming is represented in the county, have the selected families represent the most important types, keeping in mind here, also, to represent the average and below-average income levels.

Nationality - If there are definite nationality groups in the county, and the women to whom the case stories will be presented will represent these groups, consider this factor in selecting the families to be interviewed.